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RURAL DISTRICT OF WADEBRIDGE



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

Year Ending 31st December, 1958

~~February~~

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PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :


J. REED, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Surveyor and Public Health Inspector :

A. E. BEWES, F.R.I.C.S., etc.

Additional Public Health Inspector :

R. F. M. SAUNDERS, Cert.S.I.B., M.P.H.I.A.



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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year 1958.

It may be surmised from the Vital Statistics and the incidence of notifiable disease that the health of the community is satisfactory. These sources of information, of course, give no true picture of the amount of ill-health, either physical or mental, in the population, but there are no indications that the Rural District is any worse than any other area. The general impression is that in this respect we are more fortunate than those living in large industrial areas, where the environment contributes so many hazards to their well-being. We are, however, far behind many areas in the development of essential services, such as sewerage systems and water supplies. The introduction of the De Lank water supply has overcome many difficulties in relation to the latter, and the proposed combination of Water Authorities indicates that further improvement may be expected in the future. I can hardly express the same optimism in relation to sewerage problems, in fact, these become more difficult each year. Many of the systems are primitive to say the least, and have been in existence for many years, frequently unknown to the Council's staff. Their presence is usually indicated by complaint. It is true that complaints arise mainly during the holiday period, when both primitive and approved systems become grossly overloaded. It is virtually impossible to deal with these problems as statutory nuisances, since by the time such action can be taken, the nuisances have ceased. During this time we are swamped with hundreds of caravans and tents for periods outside the Council's control, and most are devoid of any visible means of sewage disposal. The Council's desire for a successful holiday season is by no means shared by the Public Health staff, whose salvation rests on a wet summer and as few visitors as possible. The Council have been familiar with these deficiencies for a long time and I have indicated in the past the possible association of bad sewerage systems with the annual toll of gastroenteritis during

the holiday period. The provision of proper disposal systems is urgent, and I feel sure that we have arrived at the stage where the Public Health Staff can no longer carry the responsibility for any calamities which may arise in this connection. The Council are at a disadvantage in needing to supply services far in excess of those required for the resident population, but if we are to fulfil our obvious function as a holiday resort, then we must provide the necessary amenities for those who come to stay.

I should like to express my thanks to the Council and Staff for their help during the year, and beg to remain,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN REED.

General Statistics

Area in Acres	....	....	....	....	....	88,064
Estimated Mid-Year Population	....	....	....	....	....	14,930
Rateable Value	....	....	....	....	....	£139,661
Product of Penny Rate	....	....	....	....	....	£569
Number of Inhabited Houses	....	....	....	....	....	5,008
Comparability Factors :—						
Births	....	....	....	....	....	1.07
Deaths	....	....	....	....	....	0.97

Vital Statistics

Births

	Registered		Live Births,		1958		Total
					Male	Female	
Legitimate	132	108	240
Illegitimate	2	3	5
					—	—	—
Total	134	111	245
Birth Rate per 1,000 population				16.4
Birth Rate per 1,000 population, England and Wales							16.4
Comparable Birth Rate			17.5

Stillbirths

Nine stillbirths were registered, 3 male and 6 female, one of which was illegitimate.

Deaths

Infant Deaths were 5, 3 male and 2 female, all legitimate. Of these deaths, three occurred within the first month of life.

Registered Deaths, 1958

	Male	Female	Total
	84	80	164
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population	....	....	11.0
Death Rate, England and Wales	....	....	11.7
Comparable Death Rate	....	....	10.78

Principle Causes of Death

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Heart Disease	29	23	52
Cerebro Vascular Disease	5	9	14
Other Circulatory Diseases	2	2	4
Respiratory Diseases. Ex. T.B.	9	2	11
Cancer	18	19	37
Diseases of Digestive System	1	1	2
Accident, Suicide, etc.	7	1	8
Respiratory Tuberculosis	—	2	2
All other causes	13	21	34
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	84	80	164
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

II GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

A. Hospital Services

The East Cornwall Hospital, Bodmin, and the Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro, are the hospitals supplying the Area for the majority of purposes. Ante-natal and Gynaecological cases are referred to the Camborne-Redruth Hospital, which also has an outpatient department in Wadebridge.

B. Local Health Authority Services

1. **Ambulance Service.** The district is covered primarily by County Council vehicles stationed in Bodmin, supplemented by Voluntary stations at Padstow and Wadebridge. The service was adequate during 1958. Sitting cases are conveyed either by County Council Utlecons or by Voluntary Car Service.

2. **District Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting Service.** This service operated for most of the year under strength, but managed to fulfil most of its requirements. Health visiting is usually the first to suffer under such circumstances.

3. **Infant Welfare.** The clinic in Wadebridge continued to be well attended, in spite of the inferior premises. Prophylactic inoculations, advice on infant care comprise the main services of the centre.

4. **Home Help Service.** Domestic help is provided in appropriate cases through the W.V.S. The majority of persons assisted continued to be old people and the need appears to be steadily increasing.

5. **Vaccination and Immunisation.** Protective inoculations against small-pox, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus and poliomyelitis were given through the General Practitioner service, School and Infant Welfare services. Protection against tuberculosis (B.C.G. vaccination) was available for contacts of the disease and for school children in their 14th year.

6. **School Health Service.** Improvements in the sanitary arrangements in St. Eval C.P. School were made during the year. Otherwise the schools remained unchanged. The routine inspection of children indicated a satisfactory standard of physical development and a few major defects were found. The proportion of seriously neglected children was very small.

III SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Water Supplies

Thirty-three samples were taken of the De Lank supply and 26 of the N.C.J.W. Board supply. All were satisfactory bacteriologically. With minor exceptions the piped supplies throughout the district operated satisfactorily during the year. No steps were taken to ensure absolute safety of the Wadebridge Town supply. Extension of existing mains were carried out, in some instances to replace contaminated well supplies, e.g., Trenance and St. Issey.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Apart from a few properly designed and constructed treatment works serving Council houses the disposal of sewage continues to be by direct discharge into rivers, streams or sea or by septic tank. All these systems in the more extensively developed parts of the district are grossly inadequate even for normal populations. They are meagre in the extreme during the holiday season and are invariably a source of trouble and anxiety. Some indication of the state of affairs may be gathered from the volume of work undertaken by the Cesspit Emptier. During the year this comprised 632 pits emptied (796 loads), an average of two loads daily, together with routine flushing of existing sewers and emptying of road gullies. The proposed sewerage schemes for Blisland, Lanivet and St. Merryn and the St. Minver Parishes remain on paper, no sanction having yet been received from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for the work to be proceeded with.

Refuse Disposal

The new site at Treworder is well situated and should give rise to no trouble. The steep gradient for vehicles created some problem, but the purchase and employment of a calf-dozer has improved the handling of refuse at the dump. It should also be possible by this means to secure adequate coverage.

Camping Sites

More and more caravans seem to arrive in the district each year, the majority staying for short periods. Caravan sites are as full as they can possibly be, and many unlicensed sites appear to accommodate the new arrivals. The more permanent sites frequently provide caravan accommodation to let to holiday makers. The facilities on some of these sites leave much to be desired, but being sites of long standing, licences continue to be issued. No new licences were approved during 1958. If, as the Planning Authority appears to wish, caravans must be forced into compact sites, we must be particularly careful to ensure that adequate sanitary facilities are supplied and that the Council's standards are firmly adhered to. At present, when facilities are poor, dispersal is probably an advantage.

Sanitary Inspection

Summary of Visits

Meat Inspection	....	....	....	....	795
Nuisances	....	....	....	....	35
Food and Drugs	....	....	....	....	74
Drainage	....	....	....	....	125
Ice Cream	....	....	....	....	18
Milk and Dairies	....	....	....	....	12
Disinfection and Fumigation	....	....	....	....	2
Factories	....	....	....	....	16
Housing	....	....	....	....	52
Water Supplies	....	....	....	....	25
Water Samples	....	....	....	....	9
Camping Sites	....	....	....	....	48
Cafes	....	....	....	....	8
Bakeries	....	....	....	....	7
Boarding Houses and Hotels	....	....	....	....	9
					<hr/>
					1,235
					<hr/>

Over half the total visits made were to the widely scattered slaughterhouses, involving a great deal of mileage. The five slaughterhouses are situated at St. Merryn, St. Tudy, Mount, Lanhydrock and Wadebridge. The majority of slaughtering is carried on in Wadebridge, where congestion of carcasses, poor natural and artificial light make inspection difficult. Journeys are required to the smaller slaughterhouses for two or three carcasses, and it will be appreciated what an expensive service the Council has to provide under existing circumstances.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned

			<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
			<i>(ex. Cows)</i>				
Number Killed	....	....	1,872	212	179	3,497	8,200
Number Inspected	....	....	1,872	212	179	3,497	8,200

All Diseases Except Tuberculosis

Whole Carcases Condemned			9	1	18	40	14
Part Carcases Condemned	....		550	11	2	225	400
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci	....		29.9	5.66	11.17	7.58	5.05

Tuberculosis Only

Whole Carcases Condemned			8	2	—	—	2
Part Carcases Condemned	....		60	25	1	—	306
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	....	....	3.63	12.74	.56	—	3.98
Cysticercosis	....	....	9	1	—	—	—
			(.48%)	(.47%)			

IV HOUSING

The Council completed no new houses during the year, but work commenced on the Cornish Unit houses on the Egloshayle site. Twenty-nine houses were completed by private enterprise. Seven informal notices were served under the Public Health Act, 1936.

V FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS

Sixteen visits were paid to factories in the district. Defects were found in 6 premises and improvement secured. Certificates of means of escape in case of fire were issued in regard to 3 premises.

VI PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Notified Infectious Diseases, 1958

Measles	....	....	....	....	....	19
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	....	....	....	....	....	6
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis	....	....	....	....	....	1
Food Poisoning	....	....	....	....	....	7
Scarlet Fever	....	....	....	....	....	2
Puerperal Pyrexia	....	....	....	....	....	1

The incidence of notifiable infectious diseases was not great. There were no cases of poliomyelitis recorded. Immunisation against this disease continued throughout the year. Nearly all the registered applicants for protection had completed their full course by the end of December. The usual procedure of contact tracing was undertaken in relation to the notified cases of tuberculosis, with X-Rays and B.C.G. vaccination where required.

The annual visit of the Mass Radiography Unit was made for the purpose of examining school leavers. No significant findings were reported. B.C.G. vaccinations were also carried out on children in their fourteenth year.

